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THE DRAMA OF PAUL HERVIEU

In the *Revue de Paris*, April 1st, 1900, there appeared an article entitled *Pessimisme et Comédie*, by Paul Hervieu, in which he analyses the tendency that the drama was taking at the time. In his essay the author comments on the change which had crept into plays, and discusses the transfer of idea which enables a playwright to refer to a production of the saddest type, such as *la Dame aux Camélias* or *les Corbeaux*, as a comedy. The position which Hervieu takes is that a moral lesson may be much more pedagogic if vice is not punished and virtue is not rewarded conspicuously at the conclusion of the performance, and he argues for this as artist. In the manner of play most common among us, if an audience sees a happy reconciliation of all contending parties at the end, it will be tempted to believe that one need not trouble about worries and dangers, that all comes out satisfactorily in the end, that some one will turn up to settle the difficulty, punish the villain, marry the deserving lovers, and straighten out all complications. Moreover, if a play ends by one or more deaths to relieve an impossible situation, there arises a tendency to regard the death of others as a great relief, to be longed for and applauded, and if we are annoyed by some good Christian, possibly there is a temptation to think that we are justified in wishing him to be quietly removed. The death of others thus becomes a benignant solution of our problem.

In the other type of play, which, according to Hervieu, presents a more accurate observance of life, the audience is taught self-control, human resignation, not a blood-thirsty triumph, inasmuch as we see human beings brought into possible and probable relations; we see their struggles, their trials, their blind decisions, and we leave them still regulating their existences as best they can, each according to his light, showing by their attempts and failures that the human animal is far from perfect, both materially and morally, and that indulgence is meet for all. Quarrel — love — be happy — suffer — know hate and pardon — be born again to happiness — know suffering

again — hope on forever — and believe constantly in the morrow; such is the series of mental pictures to be drawn from the theatre at the moment when Hervieu writes. The question rises naturally, Is this optimism or pessimism, or perhaps neither one nor the other, merely a resignation, an acceptance of the *status quo*?

The play which has exercised the greatest influence over modern French dramatists is *les Corbeaux*, by Henri Becque, played in 1882. This author apprehended that one could be very miserable in life and yet live on, and that this truth should hold for the mimic existence of the theatre as well as for actual life; so from this revelation he wrote *les Corbeaux*. The play concludes with a wedding, to be sure, but with a wedding that is a catastrophe. A lovely, generous-minded girl is married by her own free will to an old miser, and the play is called a comedy. I must add that there is a death in the action of the play, but it is merely the incident needed to set the inexorable wheels of Fate in motion. Its office is to set the key for the composition that follows. The play is classic in this respect, like the play of *Julius Cæsar*, where the spirit of the hero dominates the tragedy throughout, though he is assassinated at the beginning of the third act. In *les Corbeaux*, the father of the family dies, leaving his affairs in great confusion, and from the beginning to the end of the drama we see the widow and orphans struggling in the clutches of the various greedy and dishonest wretches, *les corbeaux*, who hope to get, each, his crow full from the estate of the deceased.

In speaking of this play, Paul Hervieu claims that it is a modern tragedy, in every sense of the word. It is characterized by unity of time, place, and action. There is an underlining of the idea *fatality* in the ancient acceptance of the word, and there is also evidently a desire to present a moral to instruct the public. The general æsthetics which lie behind this second manner of Henri Becque is a return to the classic. He uses few characters, and these he shows to be directed by a destiny that is beyond human control or ken. He shows us the struggle for existence in modern circumstances, and presents the fatal issue when those concerned are careless, imprudent,

or temperamental. His solutions are never conclusive. The curtain merely falls between us and the stage, and we are left to speculate as to the ultimate condition of these men. He makes no use of death as a key to the riddle. If his characters get in one another's way as in life, he makes no effort to relieve the tension. Let them solve their own puzzles, as in *la Parisienne*, where the curtain rises on a *ménage à trois*, and at the close of the play it descends on the same combination exactly. For the comparison, note that in *Froufrou* and other plays of that type, the heroine *always* dies as a retribution, which *always* procures a certain virtuous feeling for the audience. Hervieu declares that this is not pessimism, for pessimism teaches despair, whereas, the lesson of the theatre at the present time is to face the situation in which, by no conscious fault of your own, you have been placed, and to hope for the future. The most distinguished disciple of Henri Becque is Paul Hervieu, and in his more important dramas it is possible to see these same general principles. In 1892, when the first drama by Paul Hervieu was performed, *les Paroles Restent*, this author was already known as a writer of stories and novels: *les Yeux verts et les Yeux bleus*, *l'Inconnu*, *Flirt*, *Peints par eux-mêmes*. In all of these were shown originality and independence in subject and treatment. His motto might have been: avoid the commonplace, but accuracy in presentation or interpretation is indispensable. To show his taste and treatment, I will speak briefly of *Peints par eux-mêmes* and *l'Armature* which are the acme of hard cold realism, to be distinguished in this somewhat from the earlier manner of *les Yeux verts et les Yeux bleus*, *l'Inconnu*, and *l'Exorcisée*, where we see the author threshing through various subjects and styles to select his proper medium. In the tales last mentioned, Hervieu interests himself in the pathology of nervous and morbid conditions, especially insanity. What is it? Who is mad? How odd can one be without being properly speaking unbalanced? Is it not an over-sensitiveness to impressions, an endowment which enables some to approach and weigh relations or dissimilarities in things to an excess of which others are incapable, fortunately or unfortunately? In *les Yeux verts et les Yeux bleus*, and in *l'Alpe homicide* is to be

seen the same desire to avoid the commonplace, to investigate some extraordinary condition, to detect the unknown, the surprises in life, that lie so close around us sleeping and waking. It is the same shiver that passed through literature in the 50's, and that we hold to-day precipitated in the work of Hoffman, in Edgar Allan Poe, in Baudelaire, in L'Isle Adam, and his *Tribulat Bonhomet*. This was a mere trial heat, however, and Hervieu gave his measure in *Peints par eux-mêmes*, where he gives evidence of qualities which were only suspected before.

His previous work showed dislike of the commonplace, a power of psychology, and a curiosity about extraordinary conditions and relations expressed in an individual and realistic manner. With *Peints par eux-mêmes*, Hervieu shows brilliantly his mastery of psychological analysis and his power to present in a cold hard realism mean motives, low standards, a venal morality, and a colossal egotism that characterize a certain restricted society in the French or any other capital, for that matter. The players are a painter of portraits, a man of letters, an enormously rich jew, a banker with a marriageable daughter, a married pair, M. and Mme. Vanaut de Floches, who are working desperately to get into the choicest circles, and M. and Mme. de Trémour, the last mentioned being the *grande amoureuse*. These people limn themselves in their letters, where Hervieu gives the peculiarities of style pointing the temperament of each. The subject is the love of Mme. de Trémour for M. de Hinglé, which, however, is almost hidden by the struggles of all the characters, each after his special ambition. As the story is written in the first person, according as one or the other takes the pen, we have an unvarnished presentation of all the pettiness and much of the depravity of which human nature is capable. The book ends with the suicide of Hinglé, who has been detected cheating at cards, and the suicide of Mme. de Trémour who will not survive the beloved object. But in this fashionable world appearances are kept up always. Nobody imagines that Mme. de Trémour has killed herself for love of Hinglé. It is referred to as an overdose of morphine, which adds the grim touch that Hervieu delights in. The subject of the tale is love, and the various

kindred sentiments that masquerade more or less under this title. There is no glamor throw over any relations. There is no solution offered for any situation, each incident comes as the inevitable result of some preceding act. Fatality hangs heavily over all, and the world moves on, around and over these puppets both before and after their brief act.

Hervieu regards love as a momentary flash in the pan, an aside. The main lever of modern society is money, and the getting of money will absorb all other considerations. Such is the second step in Hervieu's development of subject which is presented in *l'Armature*. The thesis is this: to support the family, to restrain your neighbors, to furnish this admirable society of ours the appearance with which we are familiar, there is a mutual support of metal which means money. This is more or less concealed, usually quite invisible, but under stress it prevents disruption in the face of unforeseen tempests or the wrench of suspicion, when sentiment is torn to shreds and disappears, and duty and high-sounding principles shiver. This metal support remains steadfast to preserve scrupulously the shape and appearance of our fireside, and to make the repairs which we have to put at times on our street-front. Hervieu shows this condition by a simple and convincing logic. A common interest holds together what the shocks of passion had almost riven asunder, and existence continues inevitably, existence which had been disturbed only momentarily by an explosion of human nature.

This shows Hervieu a moralist, and in a sense a pessimist, though not as he understands the expression. This attitude comes out more clearly in his drama, which evolves naturally out of his earlier work. In his plays, Hervieu almost always has a thesis to prove,—and by almost, I mean in his more serious work. His first appearance as playwright was in *les Paroles Restent*, (1892), in which Hervieu shows the awful results that can spring from words uttered maliciously or thoughtlessly. As a play, it is not on a par with his later work, nor is it as representative, so I pass it over with no further comment.

The second play is *les Tenailles*, presented in 1895 at the

Comédie Française. In this the author gives his measure, and treats a matter that evidently preoccupies him. Question: shall a woman be held in marriage by laws that allow man his liberty? Is she not justified in combatting force with deceit? The plot is not intricate. There are two sisters, Pauline and Irene, married both, Pauline tolerably, Irene intolerably. Not that Irene can cite any special flagrant act of her husband that she can complain of. She says simply that his attitude is so arrogant, so tyrannical, that ten years of married life have not taught her the resignation of her sister, but despair. She does not ask for pleasure, but simply happiness. *Le mari n'est rien que mon maître absolu. Il y a toujours quelqu'un qui avait tort et lui qui avait raison*, this because he had settled down to a dull acceptance of facts as they existed, and did not want to be disturbed. Irene protested against this, and Michel, the *raisonneur*, declares that the *mariage de convenance* is bound to disappear, that selection in marriage is a grand privilege of Nature, who will assert herself in time, to confirm certain marriages, and to remarry elsewhere, without benefit of clergy, those of her children that are unhappily mated.

Religion cannot aid a woman tied to a man that she loathes, so Irene demands divorce, which her husband flatly refuses. He proposes to defend right and morality. She represents revolt against society; he has conformed to the marriage contract in every respect, and does she ask him to become divorced and lose the position that he holds in the community! No! He will take advantage of his rights, and hold her to her duty and his side. She cannot divorce without consent, and if she runs away, he will send the police after her and have her brought back. To prove equally his power and his indifference to her wishes, he forces her to leave Paris and live in a country house with him. She has a child shortly afterwards, and occupies herself with its training and care. After ten years, the husband states that it is time for the boy to go to school. The mother revolts, and declares that it shall never be, as the boy is not robust, and only her constant oversight has given him the strength to live. He invokes the law again. The wife becomes violent, cries that nothing shall tear her baby from

her, and in a final climax throws in his face that he has no interest nor part in the child as he is not its father. The man makes a wild demonstration, exclaims: *vous ne trouvez pas abominable que le fils de votre amant soit mon fils et doive toujours être mon fils?* Irene answers with a sneer "Who is it says so? Your law. The same that said that in spite of myself, in spite of everything, I must remain your wife. Each of us fights with his own weapons. You used all your strength; I used my weakness." The husband claims divorce, which she refuses absolutely. Never will she be cast adrift now. She will not change her life, she will remain where she is, as she is, because it suits her convenience. He protests bitterly against his false position. What life, what existence can he lead now! She answers him, logical, hard, bitter, inevitable: "the same that you have forced me to lead till to-day. We are riven to the same chain. It is your turn to feel its weight and help carry it. I am tired of dragging it alone." The final comment of the play is strongly characteristic of Hervieu's philosophy: *Nous sommes deux malheureux. Au fond du malheur il n'y a que des égaux.*

In *la Loi de l'homme*, Hervieu shows a woman protesting against the injustice of men in her helplessness before the law. Divorce is permitted as a relief for man, but woman cannot obtain this help when she has been unhappily married, except with the consent of her husband. The heroine Laure, is a charming, intelligent woman, who was married, principally through the aid of a large dowry, to the Count de Raguais. She finds that he is carrying on an intrigue with Mme. d'Orcieu, one of her acquaintances. She discovers the place of clandestine meeting, and filled with loathing for her husband, tries to obtain evidence for a divorce. The law refuses to interfere at her request. She learns that the law will help the husband if it is the wife that is unfaithful, but not the wife when the case is reversed. As the officer says: *C'est aux épouses à se débrouiller.* The only course open to the outraged wife is to demand a separation, which she does, and to which the faithless husband consents, allowing her a meagre income out of her own property, as he controls her dowry, and needs most of it

himself. He insists that he is no worse than most men, and that it would be wiser for her to continue outwardly the *ménage*, as so many other families succeed in doing, even when there is more reason to blame,—that is, where the wife is unfaithful. Laure takes this remark as the quintessence of masculine egotism. Are not all sexes one in a question of this kind, and is there any real difference in standard! She demands the care of their daughter, and leaves her husband. The next act is five years later when Laure comes to the sea-shore to meet her daughter who is with her father for a month, a yearly visit, as arranged at the time of the separation. Laure is already concerned about a husband for her daughter, Isabelle, and refers bitterly to the conditions under which she was married, turned over helpless, having ignorantly signed away her property to a man much her senior, who was in need of funds. She protests against the injustice of the proceeding. But, says her friend, in most cases, in spite of all their rights, their wives lead them by the nose, to which Laure replies, “*C’est le triste rôle des opprimés, duper le maître, ou le corrompre.*”

At this point the Count de Raguais drives over to call on the Kerbels, who have remained mutual friends of both husband and wife, bringing with him his daughter, Isabelle, the Count and Countess d’Orcieu, and their son, André. The young d’Orcieu has fallen in love with Isabelle, and she has agreed secretly to marry him, with the consent, however, of her father and of her mother. An interview follows between mother and daughter, in which the mother refuses to countenance the match. The Countess d’Orcieu formerly took away her husband, shall she take her daughter, as well! So she tells Isabelle that it must not be. The Count de Raguais enters and tells his former wife that it shall be, as he has no need of her consent, for the law does not require it. Driven to bay, Laure tells her daughter that the Countess d’Orcieu was her husband’s mistress. Isabelle promises to yield all thought of the marriage, and Laure leaves the young people together for a last farewell. Nature is too strong for the young girl, who promises André that she will marry him and no other. On

learning this, in order to snatch her cherished daughter from the enemy, Laure, in an intensely dramatic scene informs the Count d'Orcieu that her husband and his wife have made common cause, and she refuses her daughter for his son. At first d'Orcieu is stunned, horrified, frenzied with rage, but the thought of the innocent children restrains him. They must be guarded, protected, and the marriage must take place, as a thing politic, to assure the position of all before the world. Not only that, but there must be an appearance of reconciliation at least, between Laure and M. de Raguais: *Nous sommes réduits à nous cacher derrière des apparences*. D'Orcieu insists stonily on this, because the reëstablishment of their previous relations means the respectability of his *ménage*. He explains that either Laure returns to her husband, the children marry, and nothing is known of the tragedy, or Laure refuses, the marriage is broken off, and d'Orcieu turns his wife into the street. For love of her daughter, Isabelle, Laure consents to the former solution, and the play concludes with the appearance of the young people timidly in the background, while d'Orcieu remarks: "*Qui sait si ce n'est pas encore avoir un avenir que d'avoir à tâcher d'oublier* (pointing to the young people). *Notre autre vie, la voici déjà.*"

The next play of Hervieu is *la Course du Flambeau*. There is a great natural law at the basis of this drama: that maternal love is elemental, instinctive, irresistible; that filial love is conventional and cultivated. The law of existence demands flesh of the flesh of the mother, her beauty, her health, her life for the one to follow. She suffers expense, labor, anxiety to prepare and fit out those who are moving on towards the future. This debt is discharged by children begetting yet other children in their turn. Nature herself is a bad daughter but a good mother. There is no command in the decalogue to mothers to love their offspring, for they need none. By instinct they care for their young. Filial gratitude is a cultivated virtue. The chief character in this play, a woman, Sabine, sacrifices her happiness for her child, and is willing to give her money to keep the son-in-law in funds, but the grandmother has the frugality of all old people, and insists on hang-

ing on to her investments. Sabine even steals her mother's securities, and tries to sell them, but is discovered and thwarted. As a conclusion, she takes her daughter to St. Moritz for her health and allows her old mother to accompany them, though the physicians have explained that the high altitude would be bad for the old lady's heart. Sabine keeps back this information, for she wants her mother's money for her daughter, and as a result the grandmother dies. The daughter departs with her husband for America, leaving Sabine deserted, a monument to filial ingratitude and maternal sacrifice.

Another play produced two years later is equally strong and equally moral. The title is *le Dédale*, and the moral is that if a married pair have been blessed with a child, absolute divorce is impossible, the tie of flesh holds them together too tightly for any earthly circumstance to sever. The religious argument is furnished by Mme. Vilard-Duval, the mother, who says: where marriage is contracted before God, it endures till the last breath of the contracting parties. She tells her daughter, who has divorced her husband for infidelity: "the husband whom you had is not dead, therefore you may not re-marry, my religion forbids it." This warning, however, does not affect the young woman, who is supported in her independence, by her father, a magistrate. She says that she must live her own life, that the world owes her happiness, and she marries again, a worthy, uninteresting man who idolizes her. With her second marriage arises the question, whose is the child that she had by her first husband? The father claims it, and after a poignant interview with the former wife, an arrangement is made whereby the child goes to spend three weeks with his father. There, the boy is taken down with diphtheria. The mother is sent for, and hurries off in mad haste to the bedside of her son, whom she nurses till all danger is over. She then prepares to leave, but her first husband insists on an explanation, he must gain her pardon. On learning, by chance, that she is to slip away without the interview which she dreaded, he forces himself into her presence late at night. He threshes out their former misunderstanding in the same room, as it happened, where they had passed the first hours of their married life.

She succumbs to the power of his charm, and her own recollections. After this she refuses to return to her legal husband, and takes refuge with her father and mother. The mother is triumphant saying: "There has always been an indissoluble tie between you and M. de Pogis. In my soul and conscience you have had no other husband than him from whom you took your wedding-ring at the foot of the altar." The love of her child alone keeps the heroine from committing suicide. Hervieu removes the two men by a grapple on the edge of a precipice, and we leave the young mother to devote her broken life to the education of her son. Here is the kernel of the moral: *Mari et femme, ce n'est pas être mariés, cela n'empêche point les divergences, les antipathies, les révoltes, ni hélas! les trahisons! Mais père et mère, on est prodigieusement identiques et unis et sans attache appréciable avec le reste du monde; On n'est que ces deux là sur terre à pouvoir ne faire qu' un."*

Hervieu's last play dates from March, 1909, and is another moral lesson. It is contained in essence in the dry maxim of the great French moralist: *Nous avons tous assez de force pour supporter les maux d'autrui*. The title is *Connais-toi*, and it was given at the Français with Le Bargy and Mme. Bartet in the leading rôles. The problem is double; first — can a woman be forgiven her first infidelity? Answer: no. Second — can circumstances alter cases? Decidedly, which naturally invalidates the first conclusion. General de Sibéran, having detected Mme. Doncières, the wife of a friend, in a *rendez-vous* with her lover, apparently Pavail, urges Doncières, the husband, to get a divorce, and force the lover to marry the *divorcée*. Sibéran refuses to allow any further intiamcy between the erring spouse and his own family. *Mon opinion, c'est que pour amnistier une telle frasque de sa compagne, il faut avoir une atrophie dans les fiertés mêmes de l'instinct. Il n'y a plus de dignité dans le mariage, l'existence commune n'est plus possible lorsqu'on doit s'y avouer, se représenter que l'épouse a été tenue par les bras d'un autre. Si tu n'arrivais pas à partager mes idées là-dessus, je n'aperçois pas comment je pourrais te conserver estime et amitié,* Pavail, accused by General de Sibéran of seducing Anna Doncières,

accepts the reproach; accused by Clarisse, the young wife of the elderly General, he explains that he had lent his apartment to Jean de Sibéran son of the General, and seizing his opportunity, confesses his love for Clarisse. She demands that he ask to be transferred to Tonkin, and he accepts her decision. Anna explains to Clarisse that her infidelity was not premeditated, it was a *crise de nerfs*, a brain storm, *la force d'une volonté mâle, un magnétisme*. Jean returns, and tells his father that he was the guilty man. The General is greatly grieved, and explains the gravity of the situation. Doncières will divorce. "Then," says Jean, "I marry Anna." Sibéran refuses to consider this solution, but Jean is obstinate. Clarisse advises her husband to persuade Doncières to relinquish his divorce proceedings and take back his wife. The General feels very differently now that it turns out to be his own son that is affected by his action. *Ne soutenez donc plus qu'il n'y a que des principes. Il y a aussi les questions de personnes; il y a les sentiments, l'instinct, l'imprévu.* Clarisse and Pavail have an interview, and at the close, he seizes her in his arms and embraces her. General de Sibéran enters unexpectedly. Clarisse speaks plainly to the old martinet, and lays bare his past treatment of her, a young, affectionate, enthusiastic nature. She complains of the training that he has forced her to undergo: *Le dressage est votre sport favori. Vous avez voulu dresser mes allures, mes raisonnements, mes convictions, mon naturel. On dresse à tout peut-être sauf à aimer. . . .*

Il y a des énergies qu'on ne trouve que dans la tempête et le naufrage. Pour savoir se revolter, il faut avoir dans l'âme autre chose que de la vertu. J'ignore quel nom donner aux forces qui m'animent en ce moment. Ça ne peut pas être encore du véritable amour pour un autre, ce n'est déjà plus de la rancune contre vous. C'est toute une vitalité en moi qui remonte au jour. C'est l'instinct de vivre réellement ma part de vie. C'est la soif de respirer, enfin la quantité qui me revient. C'est un souffle de résurrection. She demands the happiness which is her due. The General is willing to make all manner of concession if she will only remain a part of his life. Doncières returns from Paris ready for his divorce, and is persuaded to take back his

wife. He goes off the stage to find Anna, and Sibéran makes this remark, referring to his friend Doncières: *Hier je l'aurais jugé grotesque et abject. Je me connaissais moins.* Clarrise answers: *Qui se connaît !*

One may not know one's self, but Hervieu has analyzed others minutely and his results are not flattering for his kind. The cases which he has chosen for presentation are of course isolated, occurring in life at intervals, if at all, and selected because they suit his dramatic purpose. Yet as he epitomizes his many deductions in these, we may be allowed to make certain inferences from his characters. Hervieu is a *moralist*; he is a *pessimist*, yet by pessimist is not meant the deplorable turn of mind that was characteristic of some years since, developed out of Schopenhauer. We must build on the lives that are reaching forward, not on those that reach back.

Hervieu's woman is intelligent, beautiful, fascinating, conscientious, sensuous, dominated by man, and usually unjustly. Her grand quality is her maternal instinct, and her most conspicuous trait is a cry for independence, a claim for a life and happiness of her own, not an existence that is merged in that of a husband. Woman has a great charm for Hervieu, and his best work is devoted to her interests and rights.

Man is a sorry animal; fickle, extravagant, unjust, fascinating, everything that is expressed by the Don Juan type. On the other hand, Hervieu conceives of a foil to this irresistible creature; a stupid, kind, indulgent, affectionate being. A man is always in love, and above all selfish. In *l'Enigme* Hervieu discusses the question of unfaithfulness in marriage from the enlightened standpoint of modern times. He exclaims against the brutality of the usual method of vindicating wounded honor, and insists that an individual may not take another's life for *any* reason. Whoever arrogates this prerogative to himself is doubly criminal, primeval, is male and female, not man and woman. Is it possible that human nature may not be trained and polished beyond a certain point, and under sufficient pressure will always become the beast!

Human nature may be well-meaning, aspiring, truthful, intrinsically moral, but is nevertheless ravaged by bursts of

passion which upset calculation, and reduce all relative logic to probability. There is a broad logic of events which is above all human power of inference and calculation. To this, man and woman, two beings, independent, self-reliant, co-workers, must submit without complaint, which would be useless, accepting their destiny with head held high, eyes dry, without flinching. Hervieu takes the tragic element which is in solution in all human life, but in most cases never suspected, and concentrates this in his dramatic crucible.

It is this revelation of human life and accident in its relentless evolution that arrests the attention and recalls the controlling motive of the classic tragedy — fatality. Especially in *le Dédale* does Brunetière call attention to the characteristic features of the construction. The *dramatis personæ* are few, swept onward by their passion which passes beyond their control, and yet they are conscious of the moral and objective value of their acts. *Ce sont des volontés qui s'analysent en s'exprimant. Des personnages qui se connaissent en agissant, et qui se jugent en succombant.* The third act of this play, however, turns to melodrama, where the two rivals lock in a deadly embrace, and after a struggle fall over a precipice to the water below.

If modern prose tragedy is possible, if it means moral study, rapidity of action, severity of dialogue, realistic simplicity of treatment, and stern logic of fatality, then Hervieu has undoubtedly approached nearer this end than any other dramatist of the present time. When, however, we consider the possibility of such dramatic work becoming definitely a part of a national literature, we hesitate to give an unqualified assent. Arnold Daly has been presenting *Know Thyself* in a translation from Hervieu, and after attending the performance one comes away convinced that such a play has no part or parcel with the thought or life of the Anglo-Saxon, for it expresses no habit or call of his nature. It is a foreign growth and will remain so.

As a presentation of French conditions, Hervieu gives situations, in many cases dramatic, which, as such, compel interest, but the theses advanced and powerfully supported are, on the one hand, due to the caprices and contradictions of the

French Criminal Code, which means a merely temporal aspect of whatever question is advanced; or on the other hand, are extraordinary crises in some human life, which would not be representative of the existence of the French people as a whole. There is genius in the work, but it has not yet struck the deep note which finds an echo in the breast of all humanity.

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